

WITH BATMAN AND ROBIN
LUGGAGE TAG

GREEN
I LOVE TO READ

SUPERMAN
POSTER inside



inside

BATMAN AND SUPERMAN

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Story: Ian Rimmer Art: Jimmy Hansen Colours: Robin Smith

IN GROWING PAINS



When Superman's planet, Krypton, exploded, its neighbouring planet, Argo, was thrown out of orbit.

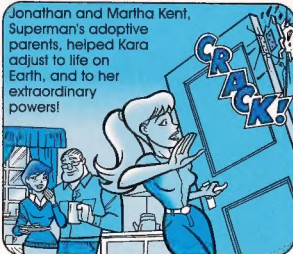
Eventually, that world perished too, but there was one survivor, Kara—also known on Earth as...

SUPERGIRL

Superman rescued Kara from her cold sleep chamber on Argo and took her to S.T.A.R. Labs. She had similar powers to his, though because she was younger, they were less strong.



Jonathan and Martha Kent, Superman's adoptive parents, helped Kara adjust to life on Earth, and to her extraordinary powers!



Clark helped too on his visits to Smallville. On one such weekend...

LIKE IT? I THOUGHT I'D JOIN YOU IN METROPOLIS FOR SOME **WORK EXPERIENCE**.

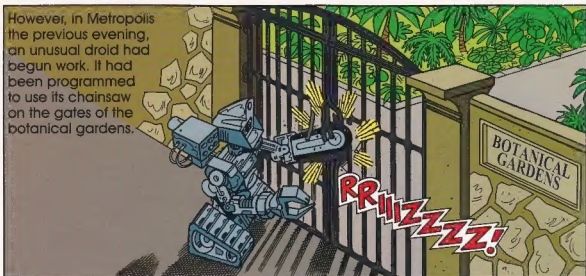
THE COSTUME'S GREAT, BUT I DON'T KNOW ABOUT GOING TO METROPOLIS.

BESIDES, IT'S BEEN QUIET THERE LATELY.

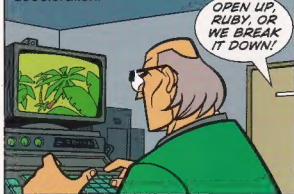


SUPERMAN created by Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster

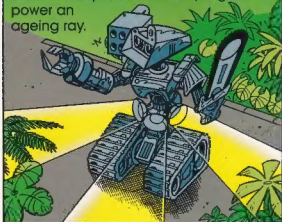
However, in Metropolis the previous evening, an unusual droid had begun work. It had been programmed to use its chainsaw on the gates of the botanical gardens.



The droid's camera relayed pictures to Professor Ruby's lab. Ruby was an ex-S.T.A.R. Labs scientist who'd gone mad working on theories of rapid growth acceleration.



Ruby had been dismissed, but before he left he stole S.T.A.R. Labs' samples of DNA from Superman and Supergirl to power an ageing ray.

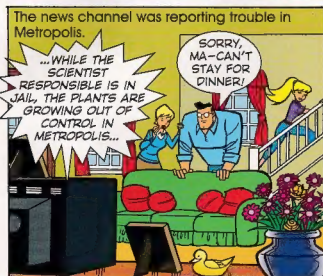
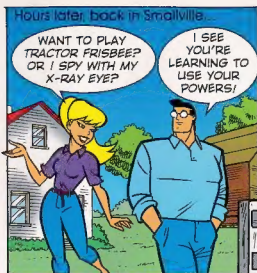


Determined to prove his theories were correct, he had mounted the ageing ray onto his hand-made droid, and sent it to the botanical gardens.

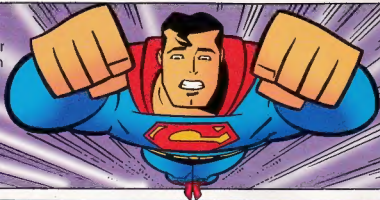


But as Ruby was led away, his droid and ageing ray continued as programmed.

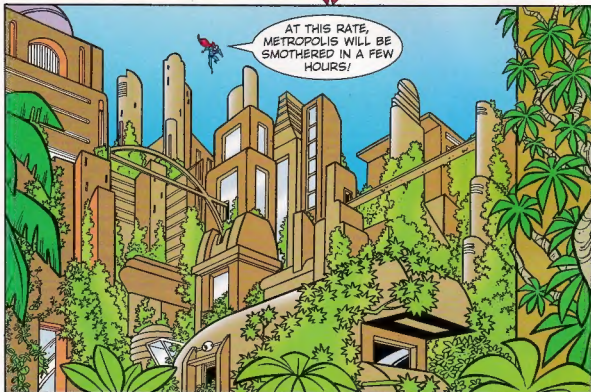




Despite Supergirl's head start, Superman's superior powers brought him to the city first.



AT THIS RATE, METROPOLIS WILL BE SMOTHERED IN A FEW HOURS!

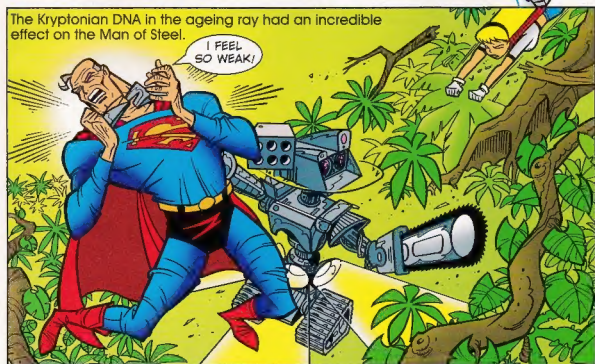
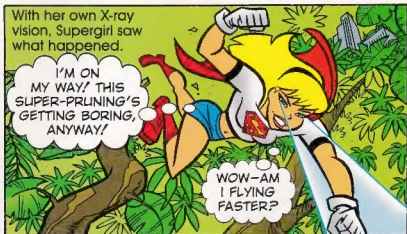


IT'S SOME KIND OF DROID AT THE HEART OF THE CITY EMITTING AN AGEING RAY CAUSING THE PLANTS TO GROW OUT OF CONTROL.



Supergirl soon arrived and while Superman went for the droid, she began to slice through the edges of the vegetation to stop it from spreading.







Once the ray was destroyed, so were its effects.

THANKS, SUPERGIRL—I OWE YOU ONE. GOOD THING YOU'RE SO YOUNG—GROWING OLDER IN THE RAY MADE YOUR POWERS STRONGER!

I SAW MY REFLECTION ON THE DROID JUST BEFORE I HIT IT. THAT AGEING RAY SHOWED ME MY FUTURE.



I LOOKED JUST LIKE MY MOTHER. AS I GROW OLDER I *WILL* SEE HER AGAIN—EVERY TIME I LOOK IN THE MIRROR.



THE END

PEWEE I LOVE TO READ

BATMAN AND SUPERGIRL

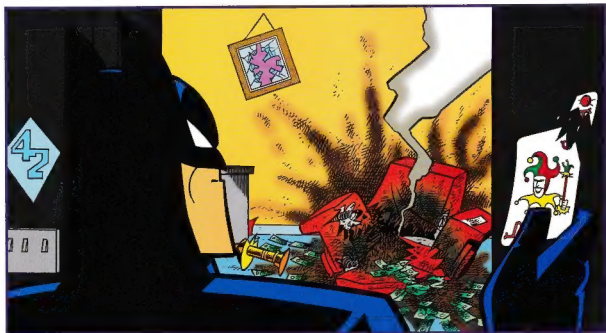


Batman's not laughing in the story...

JOKING APART

Batman surveyed the wrecked basement room, his trained eyes taking in every detail: the tattered remains of a whoopee cushion, the wrecked armchair under which the cushion had been hidden; the blast patterns spreading out across the room; the burnt and charred dollar bills that were being counted when the cushion exploded. And, finally, the playing card, pinned to the door.

It was a joker.



Thankfully, no-one had been hurt in the blast. It was, Batman suspected, meant as a warning. An exploding whoopee cushion, the playing card—it all looked like the handiwork of his arch enemy, the Joker.

Only the Joker was safely locked up in Arkham Asylum.

Someone else was trying to make it look like the Joker was still at large in Gotham. Batman could make a pretty shrewd guess as to 'who', but it was the 'why' he didn't understand. Yet.

Leaving Commissioner Gordon's men to sift through the wreckage, Batman took to the rooftops. As he swung out over the neon-lit city, the Dark Knight reviewed the facts. Earlier that day, three known criminals had held up a treasury van in Gotham, escaping with over twenty thousand dollars worth of old bills which had been scheduled for incineration. They had returned to their cellar hideout to count their haul, but had ended up in hospital being treated for shock and minor burns.

Criminals taking out other criminals, but leaving the loot to burn. Something

odd was afoot in the Gotham underworld, and somehow the Joker was connected. It was time, Batman decided, to get the word on the street.

Later that night at Black Jack's, an illegal gambling club, a con man known as Fat Matt looked up at the dealer over the cards he held clenched in his stubby, sweating hands. Perched on a stool, Matt shifted nervously.

Everything was riding on this next turn of a card. "Hit me," croaked Matt, his throat tight and voice strained.

"Don't tempt me," said a deep voice from behind him. Matt paled. Batman leaned over his shoulder, his face close to Matt's jowly cheek. "The smart play," Batman advised, "would be to tell me everything you know about whoopee cushions. Particularly the *exploding* variety."

From past experience, Batman knew Matt kept bad enough company to have already heard about the incident. If anyone knew what was going on, he would.

Before Matt could reply, however, the club bouncer appeared. It was clear he intended to remove Batman from the premises. However, it was equally clear that the crime fighter meant to stand his ground.

This was Matt's cue to leave, and hauling his bulk off the stool, he puffed his way to the exit. Turning back, he saw Batman sidestepping the bouncer's charge. As the fight started, Matt fled the building.

Outside, he stumbled away from the club. Perhaps, he thought, he could lose Batman in the warren of streets and alleys that criss-crossed the neighbourhood.

Perhaps —

Batman stepped out of the shadows, *in front* of Matt. His expression seemed to suggest Matt should really have known better. The con man sighed. "The way I hear it," he said after a few moments, "is that some guys are tryin' to muscle in on the Joker's territory while he's... *indisposed*. Only someone's protecting his turf, an' the most likely suspect is—"

"The way I hear it, Matt," said Batman,



interrupting, "is that the Gotham Toy Emporium is going to get robbed on its opening day. All those first day takings would be quite a score."

Matt frowned. "I ain't heard nothin' about that," he said at last. "You sure?"

"Very sure," said Batman. "And you, Matt, are going to see that all the wrong people hear about it."

Two days later, the manager of the Gotham Toy Emporium was saying goodnight to the last of his staff as they left the store. Opening day business had been a great success, and the day's takings were in the manager's office waiting to be counted up.

Pulling the store's front door closed, he grasped the handle, turning it sharply downward to throw the main deadbolt into place. As it clicked, the manager was jolted by a sudden electric shock which sent him flying backwards.

Dazed on the shop floor, the manager caught sight of one of the store's giant teddy bears as it got to its feet and started walking towards him. Then he blacked out.

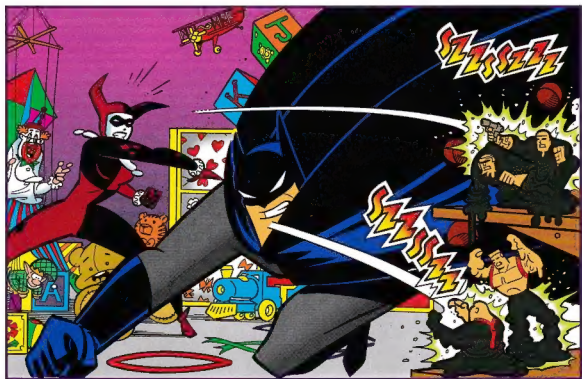
The bear looked down at him. Then, grasping both sides of its face firmly, it lifted its head off. Underneath, the face of Harley Quinn beamed out. "Wow," she giggled, "was that a *shocking* entrance or what?"

Stripping off the rest of her bear costume, Harley skipped down the main aisle of the store. In the manager's office, she quickly located the day's takings. She had no intention of stealing them, however. No, it would be much more effective to rig a little surprise for the thieves, whoever they were.



Maybe quick hardening crazy string, or perhaps a rubber chicken which laid gas-filled eggs. And, of course, the joker playing card. Placed where everyone would see it so no one would doubt that the Joker's reach extended beyond the walls of Arkham. Soon, they'd be scared to steal so much as a chocolate bar on the Joker's turf.

Settling for toxic chattering teeth, Harley left the office. She stopped partway to the door, the smile falling from her face. The manager was gone. Well, not completely gone. Bits of him were still there; a wig, a rubber face mask, his discarded suit.



Batman emerged from behind the inflatable dinosaurs on aisle six. "It's over, Harley," he said. "You're going to join your boyfriend at Arkham."

"Much as I'd like that, Batman," said Harley, plucking one of the coloured balls from her jester's hat, "I'm afraid my puddin' would want me to carry on his good work."

With that she threw the ball at Batman, who dived to one side just in time. The ball smashed against a row of action figures and the acid it released reduced them to a smoking mass of melted plastic.

Harley turned and ran, pausing only to place a toy soldier on the ground. Batman followed, flipping himself safely into the air as the soldier's mini sub-machine gun opened fire.

As Harley reached for her glue worms, Batman decided enough was enough. His Batarang flew through the air into a display of dolls above Harley's head. The impact dislodged the display and the criminal was bombarded by the falling toys. She slumped down, dazed.

As Batman secured her hands, he reflected on Harley's strange obsession with the Joker. It had to have been her looking out for the Joker and his territory—no one else would have bothered. Probably not even the Joker, come to that. The Clown Prince of Crime had always been more concerned with trying to outdo Batman.

The Dark Knight's plan had been simple. All he'd had to do was invent a crime, and then step in in place of the manager. The insulated gloves and boots had protected him from Harley's electric shock. But as it turned out, he had made sure that the final shock was hers.

THE END